



June 5, 2006

Two plead guilty in gang-related pipe bomb explosion in which a woman lost an eye

Bobby Soundara, 20 and **Vanhhatdy Souvaunaxab**, 19, both of Providence, have pled guilty to federal explosives charges in connection with a pipe bomb explosion at a Cranston house in which a woman lost an eye. An investigation by Cranston Police and federal agencies determined that the bombing was related to street gang rivalries.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the guilty pleas, which Soundara and Souvaunaxab entered on June 2 before U.S. District Court Judge William E. Smith in U.S. District Court, Providence.

At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard W. Rose said that the government could prove that Souvaunaxab made four pipe bombs and was in a caravan of cars early in the morning of September 11 when Soundara tossed one of the bombs through the window of a house on West Harry Street, Cranston. Their intended target, a member of a rival gang, lived at the house but was not home at the time. However his mother was awakened by the sound of shattering glass and, when the pipe bomb exploded, she lost an eye and suffered other serious injuries.

Soundara was arrested in November on a federal complaint that resulted from an investigation by Cranston Police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the

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Federal Bureau of Investigation and Providence Police. Souvaunaxab was arrested in January following the return of a two-count federal indictment.

Souvaunaxab admitted that he constructed the bomb from materials that he had stolen from his employer and used explosives from fireworks purchased in New Hampshire. He said he used a hot glue gun to seal the pipe containing the volatile explosives. Materials found at Soundara's home in Providence matched traces of material found at the scene of the explosion and he admitted having thrown the bomb into the West Harry Street house.

Both men admitted being members of the Laos Pride gang. Their intended target was affiliated with a rival gang, the Young Bloods.

Soundara and Souvaunaxab pled guilty to two charges: damaging a building by fire that also resulted in personal injury and possessing an unregistered pipe bomb. The maximum penalty for the first offense is 40 years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine, with a mandatory minimum prison sentence of seven years. The maximum for the second is ten years in federal prison and a \$10,000 fine. Both defendants are detained in federal custody pending sentencing, which is scheduled for September 1.

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